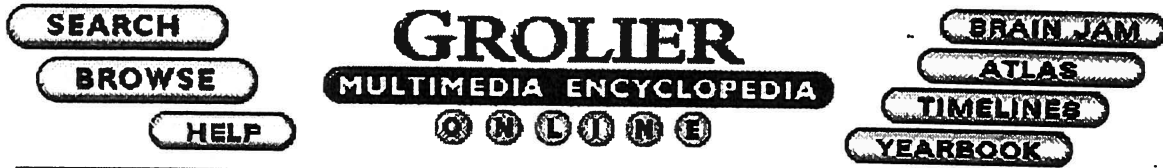


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 Pictures  Links

Steinbeck, John

{styn'-bek}

An American author and winner of the 1962 Nobel Prize for literature, John Ernst Steinbeck, Jr., b. Salinas, Calif., Feb. 27, 1902, d. Dec. 20, 1968, based most of his novels on the American experience, often with sympathetic focus on the poor, the eccentric, or the dispossessed. Steinbeck grew up in Salinas Valley, a rich agricultural area of Monterey County and the setting of many of his works, where he learned firsthand of the difficulties of farm laborers. From 1919 to 1925 he studied intermittently at Stanford University but did not receive a degree. His early novels (*Cup of Gold*, 1929; *The Pastures of Heaven*, 1932; and *To a God Unknown*, 1933) aroused little public interest. The latter novel, however, a mystical story of self-sacrifice, is one of Steinbeck's strongest statements about the relationship between people and the land.

Artistic Success

Steinbeck's first popular success was *Tortilla Flat* (1935), an episodic tale that recounts semihumorously the adventures of a raffish band of Mexican-Americans. The books that followed were terse and grim. *In Dubious Battle* (1936) is the tragic story of a young labor organizer during an apple pickers' strike. *Of Mice and Men* (1937) depicts the lives of two itinerant farmworkers and the tragedy that comes when their dreams are shattered. Rewritten as a play, it was produced on Broadway in 1937 and filmed in 1939. *Their Blood Is Strong* (1938) is Steinbeck's nonfictional account of conditions in migrant agricultural workers' camps, derived largely from articles written for the *San Francisco News*. It probably formed the basis for *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939; film, 1940), which won both the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award and brought the plight of dispossessed farmers to the public's attention.

Later Life and Works

Steinbeck turned to filmmaking after the film success of *The Grapes of Wrath*. He wrote impressive screenplays for the Mexican-based *The Forgotten Village* (1941) and *Viva Zapata!* (1952), as well as film scripts for his stories *The Red Pony* (1938) and *The Pearl* (1947). Another novel and play, *The Moon Is Down* (1942), about the German invasion of Norway, won critical praise.

After World War II, in which he served as a war correspondent, Steinbeck wrote increasingly about social outcasts. *Cannery Row* (1945) relates the story of a group of vagabonds on the Monterey coast. *The Wayward Bus* (1947) presents a morality tale about characters who supposedly represent middle-class society. *Burning Bright* (1950) preached universal brotherhood but was largely unsuccessful.

Steinbeck devoted several years to his most ambitious project, *East of Eden* (1952; film, 1955), which paralleled the history of his mother's family and was an allegorical modernization of the

biblical story of Adam. Subsequent novels proved anticlimactic--*Sweet Thursday* (1954), a sentimental sequel to *Cannery Row*; *The Short Reign of Pippin IV* (1957), a burlesque; and *The Winter of Our Discontent* (1961), a moralistic tale about a decaying Long Island seaport.

Steinbeck wrote popular sketches of his travels in *Once There Was a War* (1958), *Travels with Charley* (1962), and *America and Americans* (1966). He spent many of his later years writing a modern version of Thomas Malory's *Morte Darthur*, which was published, incomplete and posthumously, as *The Acts of King Arthur and His Noble Knights* (1976). He has remained popular principally, however, for his compassionate portrayal of America's forgotten poor.

Warren G. French

Bibliography: Benson, Jackson T., *The True Adventures of John Steinbeck, Writer: A Biography* (1990); DeMott, R., ed., *Working Days: The Journals of "The Grapes of Wrath"* (1989); Fensch, Thomas, ed., *Conversations with John Steinbeck* (1988); Lisca, Peter, *The Wide World of John Steinbeck* (1981); Noble, Donald R., ed., *The Steinbeck Question: New Essays in Criticism* (1992); Owens, Louis, *John Steinbeck's Re-Vision of America* (1985); Parini, Jay, *John Steinbeck* (1995); Steinbeck, Elaine, and Wallsten, Robert, eds., *Steinbeck: A Life in Letters* (1975).

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John Steinbeck: A Brief Chronology

1902 On February 27, John Steinbeck was born in Salinas, California. He was the third of four children and the only son of John Ernst II and Olive Hamilton Steinbeck. He spent his childhood and adolescence in the Salinas Valley, later called "the salad bowl of the nation."

1915-19 Attended Salinas High School

1919-25 Attended classes at Stanford University, leaving without taking a degree. During these years, Steinbeck dropped out for several months and was employed intermittently as a sales clerk, farm laborer, ranch hand, and factory worker.

1925 November, traveled by freighter from Los Angeles to New York City; worked as a construction laborer and, briefly, for the *New York American*

1926-28 Lived in Lake Tahoe, California and worked as a caretaker for a summer home.

1929 August, publication of first novel, *Cup of Gold*, by McBride (New York).

1930 January 14, marries Carol Henning. October, meets Edward F. Ricketts, marine biologist, philosopher, longtime friend.

1932 October, novel, *The Pastures of Heaven*, published by Brewer, Warren, and Putnam (New York).

1933 September, novel, *To A God Unknown* published by Ballou (New York).

1934 Gathers information on farm labor unions. Interviews labor organizer in Seaside.

1935 May 28, first popular success, novel *Tortilla Flat* about Monterey's paisanos. Published by Covici-Friede (New York); beginning of lifelong friendship with editor Pascal Covici.

1936 October, novel, *In Dubious Battle*, about striking workers. Published by Covici-Friede.

1937 February 6, play-novelette, *Of Mice and Men* published by Covici-Friede; Summer, first trip to Europe and Russia; September, *The Red Pony*, three connected stories, published by Covici-Friede; November 23, New York opening of the play *Of Mice and Men* (207 performances).

1938 April, *Their Blood Is Strong*, a nonfiction account of the migrant labor problem in California, published by the Simon J. Lubin Society (San Francisco); May, receives the New York Drama Critics Circle Award for the play *Of Mice and Men*; September, short story collection, *The Long Valley*, incorporating *The Red Pony*

(1937), published by Viking (New York), where Pascal Covici became an editor after the bankruptcy of his own firm.

1939 April, *The Grapes of Wrath*, his greatest critical success, published by Viking, provoking both great popular acclaim and violent political condemnation for its depiction of Oklahoma migrants and California growers, as well as for its alleged "vulgar" language and socialist bias.

1940 January, films of *Of Mice and Men* and *The Grapes of Wrath* released; March 11 - April 20, marine expedition in the Gulf of California with Ricketts; Spring, receives the National Book Award and the Pulitzer Prize for *The Grapes of Wrath*; Summer, documentary film about living conditions in rural Mexico, *The Forgotten Village*.

1941 Spring, separated from Carol; fall, moves to New York City with singer Gwyndolyn Conger; December 5, *Sea of Cortez*, written with Edward Ricketts, published by Viking.

1942 March, sued for divorce by Carol; March 6, novel, *The Moon Is Down* published by Viking; April 8, New York opening of the play *The Moon Is Down*; May, film of *Tortilla Flat* released; November 27, *Bombs Away* published by Viking.

1943 March, film of *The Moon Is Down* released; March 29, marries Gwyn Conger in New Orleans; June-October, in Europe and North Africa as war correspondent for *New York Herald Tribune*.

1944 August 2, birth of first son, Thom.

1945 January 2, publication of novel *Cannery Row*, by Viking.

1946 June 12, birth of second son, John IV.

1947 February, novel, *The Wayward Bus*, published by Viking; August-September, tour of Russia with photographer Robert Capa, for the *New York Herald Tribune*; November, novella *The Pearl* published by Viking.

1948 April, *A Russian Journal*, an account of his 1947 tour of Russia, published by Viking; May, Ed Ricketts killed in automobile accident; August, divorced by Gwyn; December, elected to American Academy of Arts and Letters.

1950 October, novella, *Burning Bright*, published by Viking; October 18, New York City opening of the play *Burning Bright*; December 28, marries third wife, Elaine Anderson Scott.

1951 September, *The Log from the Sea of Cortez*, the narrative part of the *Sea of Cortez* (1941) including an original essay "About Ed Ricketts," published by Viking.

1952 March, film, *Viva Zapata!* released (screenplay published in Rome by Edizioni Filmcritica in 1953; first

published in America, edited by Robert Morsberger, by Viking in 1975); September, novel *East of Eden* published by Viking.

1954 June, novel, *Sweet Thursday*, published by Viking (a sequel to *Cannery Row*).

1955 March, purchases a summer home in Sag Harbor, Long Island, New York; November 3, New York City opening of *Pipe Dream*, a Richard Rogers and Oscar Hammerstein III musical based on *Sweet Thursday*.

1957 April, novel, *The Short Reign of Pippin IV*, published by Viking; film of *The Wayward Bus* released.

1958 September, *Once There Was a War*, a collection of his 1943 wartime dispatches, published by Viking.

1959 February-October, travels in England and Wales, researching background for a modern English version of Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* (1485).

1960 September-November, tours United States with poodle, Charley.

1961 April, twelfth novel, *The Winter of Our Discontent*, published by Viking.

1962 July, *Travels with Charley*, the journal of his 1960 tour, published by Viking; October 25, Steinbeck is awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature.

1963 October-December, travels to Scandinavia, Eastern Europe, and Russia on United States Information Agency cultural tour, with dramatist Edward Albee.

1964 September 14, presented with United States Medal of Freedom by President Lyndon B. Johnson.

1966 October 12, *America and Americans*, reflections on contemporary America, published by Viking.

1968 December 20, dies of arteriosclerosis in New York.

1969 Publication of *Journal of a Novel: The "East of Eden" Letters*, journal kept during composition of *East of Eden* published by Viking.

1975 *Steinbeck: A Life in Letters* (selected correspondence), edited by Elaine Steinbeck and Robert Wallsten, published by Viking.

1976 Publication of *The Acts of King Arthur and His Noble Knights* (edited by Chase Horton), an unfinished translation of *Morte d'Arthur*.

1979 U.S. commemorative stamp issued on what would have been his seventy-seventh birthday

1984 *The True Adventures of John Steinbeck, Writer* (biography), by Jackson J. Benson is published by Viking; pictured on half-ounce gold medal issued by the U.S. Government.

1989 *Working Days: The Journal of "The Grapes of Wrath,"* edited by Robert DeMott (journal kept during writing of the novel in 1938, published on the novel's fiftieth anniversary).

1991 Frank Gallati's Steppenwolf Theater dramatization of *The Grapes of Wrath* wins New York Drama Critics' Circle Award for best play of the season.

1992 Gary Sinise directs and stars in (with John Malkovich), in another film version of *Of Mice and Men* ; Nantucket conference on "Steinbeck and the Environment," co-sponsored by the Steinbeck Research Center and University of Massachusetts.

1994 Biography by Jay Parini, *John Steinbeck: A Biography* is published in England by Heinemann.

1995 A revised version of Parini's biography is published in the United States by Henry Holt and Company in New York.

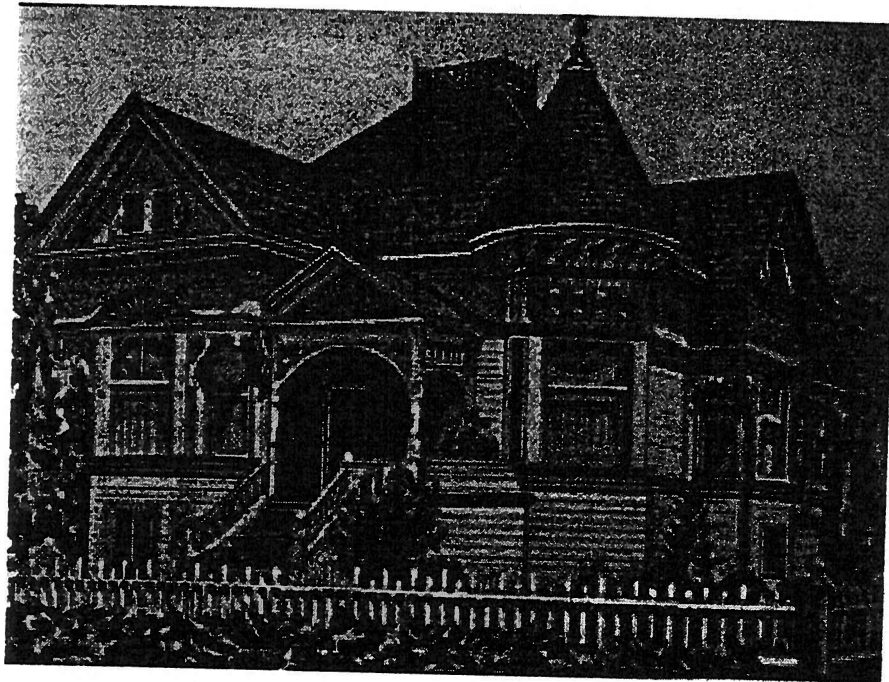
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Steinbeck Homes and Locations

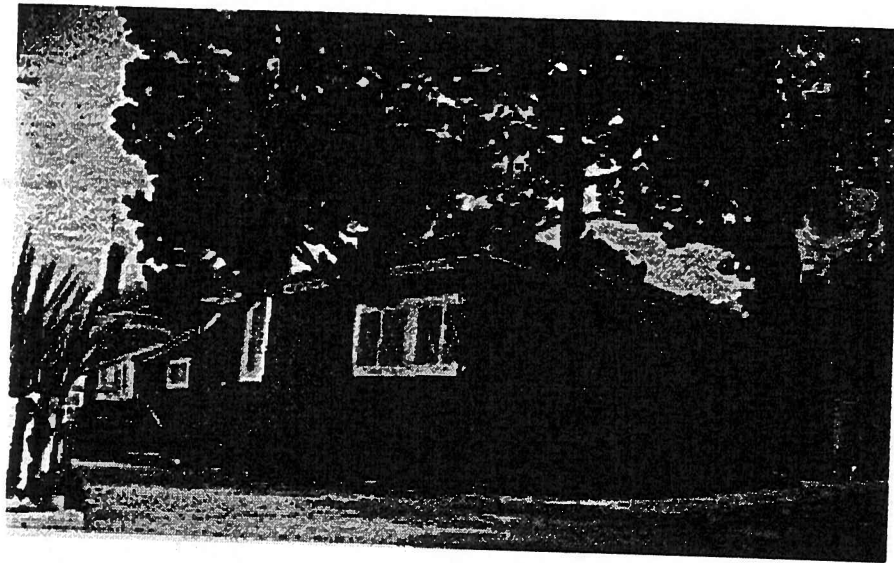
This document lists the various homes and some of the places he visited and used in his writings.

Birth Place - Steinbeck House



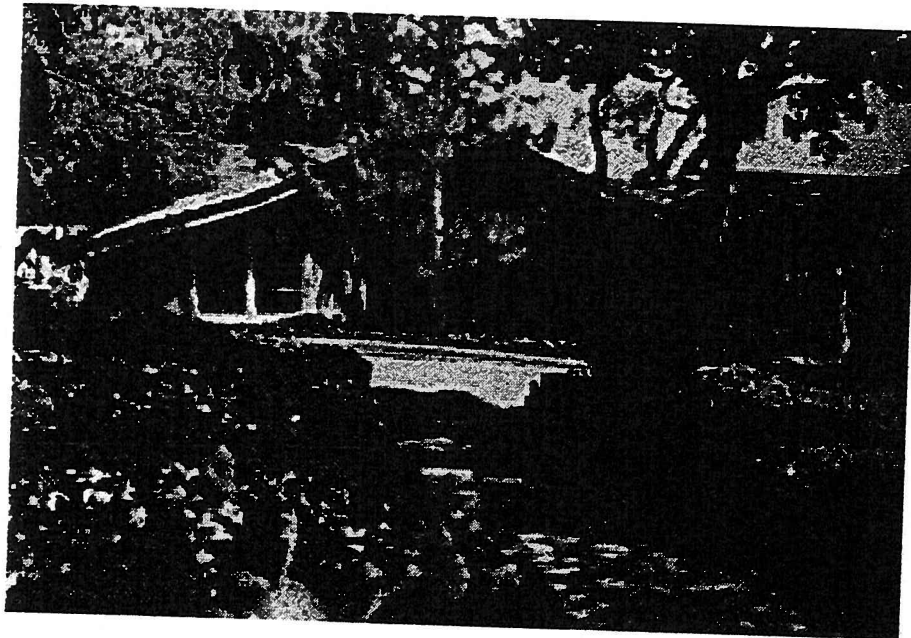
Built in 1897 by J. J. Conner, the two-story frame dwelling is located in Salinas, California two blocks west of Main Street on the corner of Central Avenue and Stone Street. The house was purchased by Steinbeck's parents in 1900, and he was born in the bedroom to the left of the entrance way on February 27, 1902. John grew up here, occupying an upstairs bedroom that overlooked Central Avenue. After Steinbeck's parents passed away in the middle 1930s, the house was sold to Mrs. Marie Koenecke Klute. The Klutes resided there until 1953, after which the home was unoccupied except for an occasional tenant. In 1967 when Mrs. Klute passed away, the house was entrusted to the Hartnell College Newman Foundation as a center for the Newman Club. Student members took on the task of renovating the house which was dedicated on December 20, 1969. The Newman Club used the house as a student residence and meeting hall. In 1971 the club sold the house to the Valley Guild of Salinas, a women's organization, and the home was converted into a restaurant staffed by volunteers. It serves lunches weekdays and Saturdays.

Pacific Grove Cottage

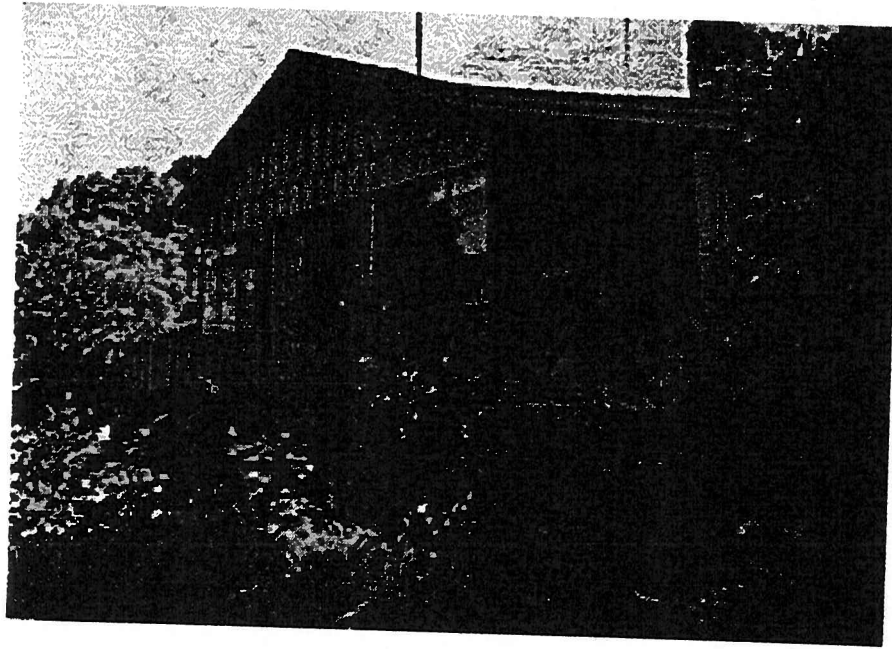


In 1903 John Ernst Steinbeck, Sr. built a small three-room summer cottage made of wood painted reddish brown in Pacific Grove, California near the ocean. Located at 147 Eleventh Street, this house was used by the Steinbeck family as a summer vacation home. Steinbeck lived in this cottage from 1930-6 with his first wife, Carol, as he struggled to become a successful writer. He returned to the house to live at various times in the 1940s.

Greenwood Lane Home

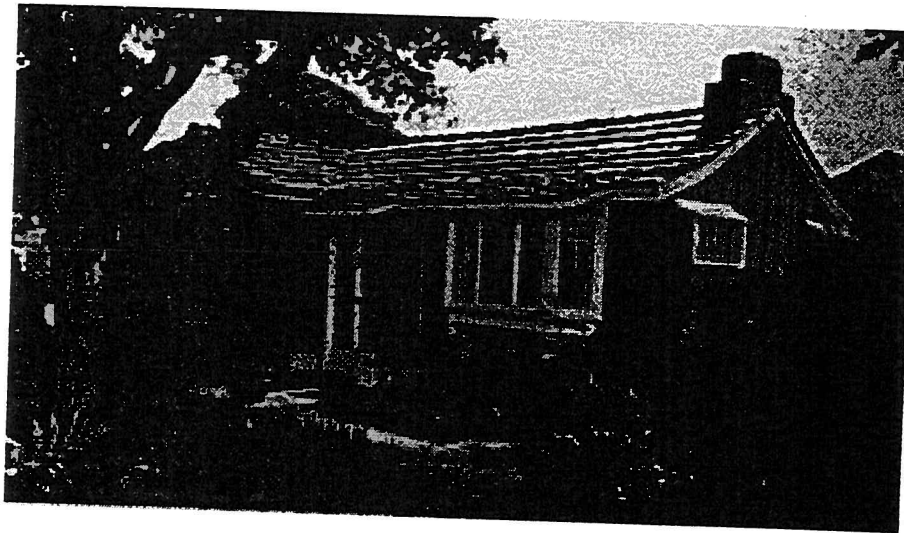


Biddle Ranch House



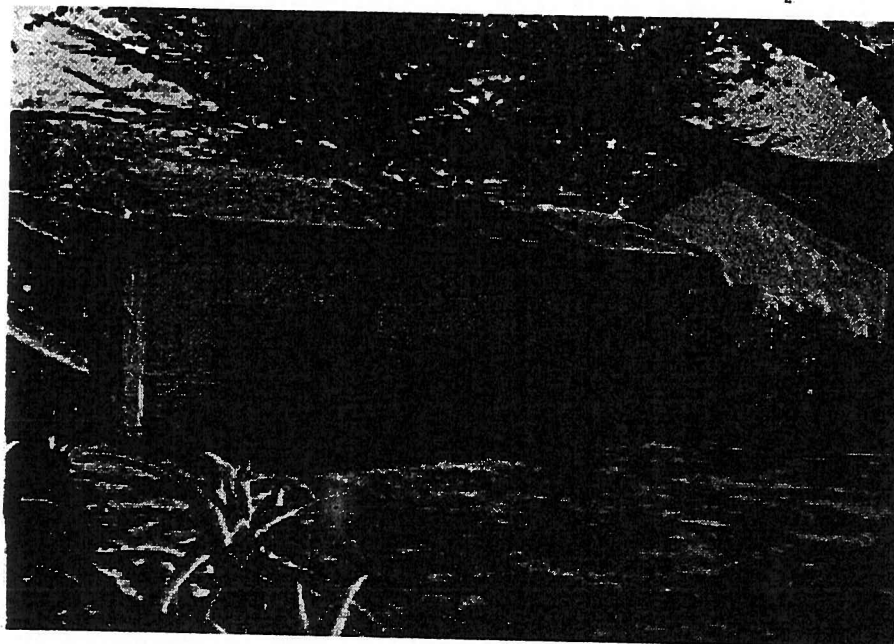
The Steinbecks started looking at secluded real estate by mid-summer of 1938 while he was writing *The Grapes of Wrath*. They settled on the Biddle ranch, a forty-seven acre spread in the Santa Cruz Mountains above Los Gatos, California. After selling their property on Greenwood Lane, the Steinbecks moved into the existing old farmhouse while their new home was being built. Construction of the home began early September, 1938. The house was completed by December. While they lived in this house, their marriage was deteriorating. John and Carol separated in late April, 1941, and the property was sold in late August.

Eardley Street House in Pacific Grove



In April 1941, after his separation from Carol, Steinbeck purchased a small house on Eardley Street in Pacific Grove, California. He spent time with Ed Ricketts at the lab, which was not far from the Eardley Street house. During his stay in this house, he worked on *Sea of Cortez* and a screenplay (*The Forgotten Village*). After his divorce from Carol became final in 1943, John married Gwyndolyn Conger and they moved to New York City.

Soto House in Monterey



The Lara Soto Adobe is on Pierce Street in Monterey, California. In October 1944, Gwyn and John Steinbeck moved back to Monterey. Steinbeck had admired this old adobe home from his youth and now he was able to buy it. Steinbeck's delight in his new house was not to last long. Because of the cool reception he received in Monterey, John and Gwyn and their baby boy, Thom, moved back to New York City.

The photographs of the houses owned by John Steinbeck above were provided courtesy of Anne-Marie Schmitz from her book *In Search of Steinbeck*. Los Altos, CA: Hermes Publications, 1978.

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Steinbeck Country

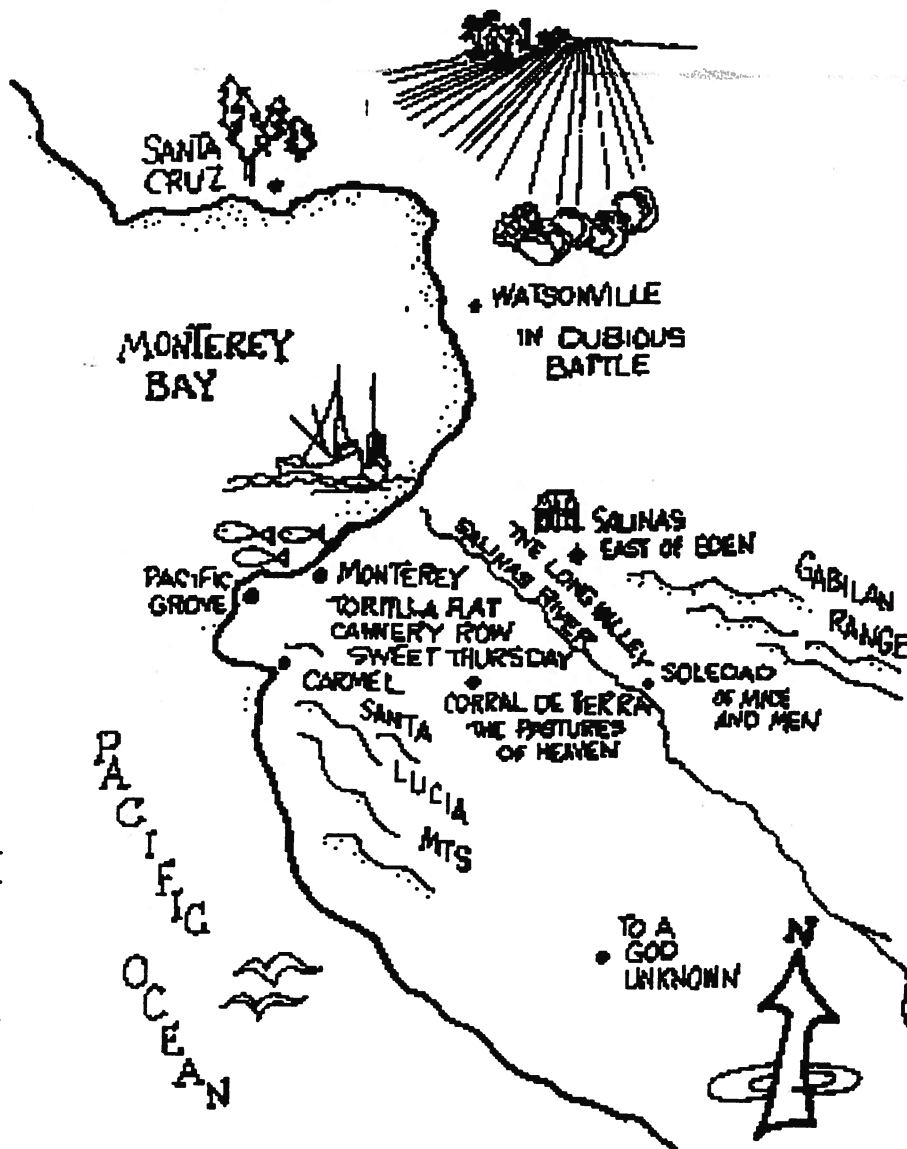
John Steinbeck is, at heart, a novelist of the California experience. Born in Salinas in 1902, he grew up in the fertile Salinas Valley, the "Salad Bowl of the Nation," as it was later called. That sharply beautiful and expansive landscape, where Steinbeck spent hours as a boy roaming the hills, shaped Steinbeck's creative vision. But the small town of Salinas, populated by energetic and enterprising Westerners, circumscribed the restless and rebellious young man, who had decided at age 14 that he wished to be a writer. To please his parents, he enrolled at Stanford University in 1919; to please himself he signed on only for those courses that interested him-- literature, creative writing, and a smattering of science. Without taking a degree, he left in 1925, tried his fortunes in New York City, and then returned to his native state in order to find leisure to perfect his craft. He found both the time to write and, at length, a wife during a two-year period as a caretaker for a Lake Tahoe estate. He and his new wife Carol, a San Jose native, settled in the Steinbeck family's summer home in Pacific Grove, she to search for jobs to support them, he to continue writing. The year was 1930.

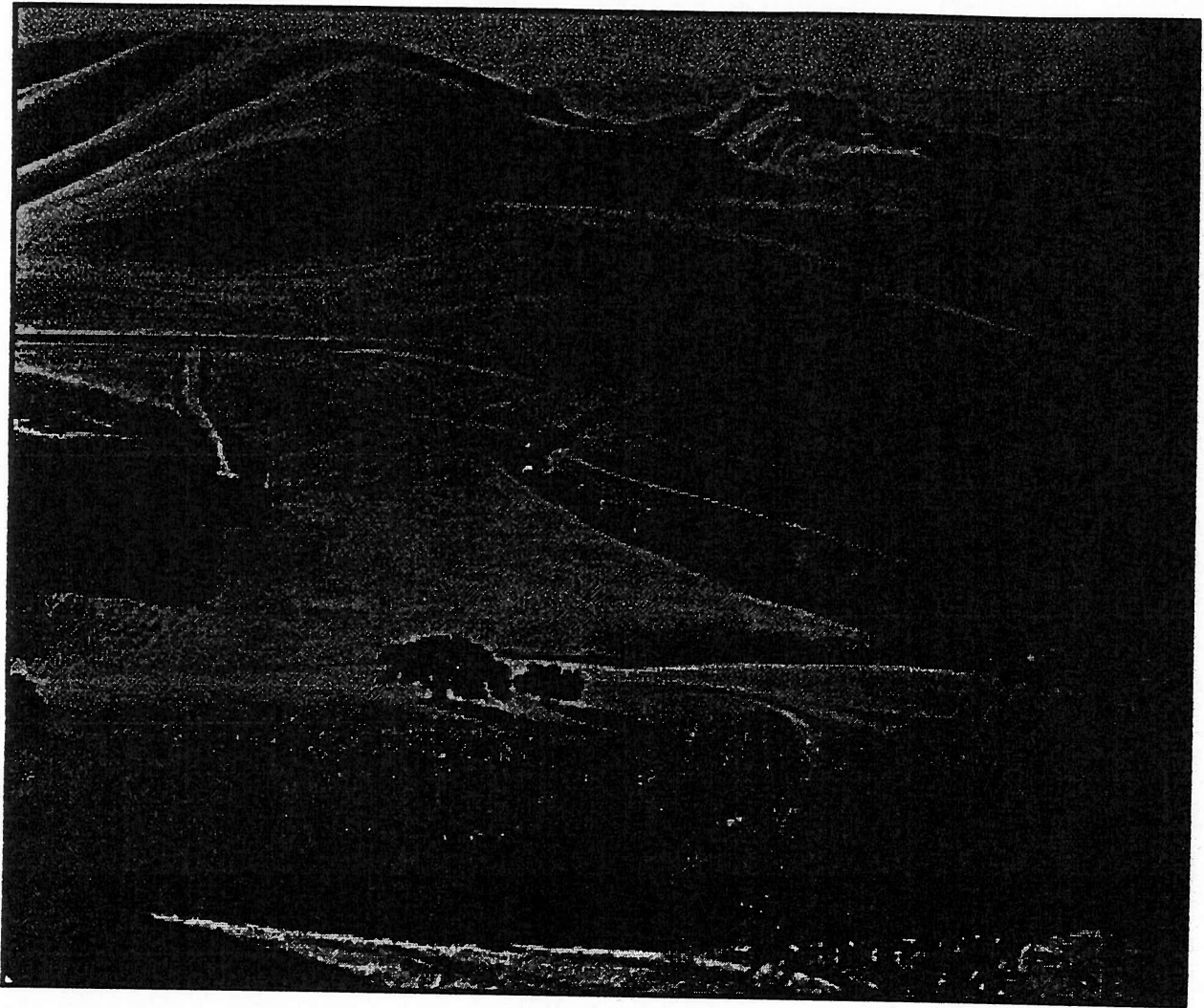
Many claim that the decade of the 1930s saw Steinbeck's greatest works, from the early stories collected in *The Long Valley* (1938), to his recognized masterpieces: *Tortilla Flat* (1935), *In Dubious Battle* (1936), *Of Mice and Men* (1937) and *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939). Each book is defined by Steinbeck's sensitivity for common man--misfits, striking workers, a lonely ranch wife, piasanos, migrants who sought prosperity in the golden land. And each work of fiction is informed by the idea that people must be seen in the context of their environments. Early in the 1930s he wrote: "the trees and the muscled mountains are the world--but not the world apart from man--the world and man--the one inseparable unit man and his environment. Why they should ever have been understood as being separate I do not know." Steinbeck's California fiction, from apprenticeship novel, *To a God Unknown* (1932) through his epic treatment of the Salinas Valley, *East of Eden* (1952)--written after his move to New York City--envision the dreams and defeats of common people as shaped by the magnificent land they inhabit.

Steinbeck gradually lost his compelling need to write about California's land and people when he moved east, first in 1942 after separating from Carol, his first wife; and finally in 1950, when he married Elaine Scott, his third wife. In the latter decades of his life, Steinbeck travelled extensively around the world, always writing. But the book that defined him, in America and throughout the world, has always been the last book he wrote in the 1930s, *The Grapes of Wrath*. In that novel he captured not only an historical moment--the plight of migrants who poured into California in the 1930s--but also the plight of any people in flight, any disposed, any homeless any powerless.

This map depicts the major places mentioned by Steinbeck in his California fiction.

STEINBECK COUNTRY





Below are brief descriptions of places located in "Steinbeck Country." Date of first publication follows work.

Big Sur

"Flight" (1938) is set along the Big Sur coast below Monterey. In the early 1920s Steinbeck worked for the first surveying crew in the Big Sur area before the U.S. Highway 1 was constructed. Steinbeck's mother had also taught school in the Big Sur area before marrying his father.

Carmel Valley

The highest point in the Gabilan Mountains is Fremont's Peak (elevation 3,169'), located eleven miles southeast of San Juan Bautista. It can be reached by a scenic winding road that provides an excellent view of the Salinas Valley. Steinbeck described it in *Travels with Charley* (1962) and in *East of Eden* (1952).

The Great Tide Pool

The Great Tide Pool is an area on the tip of the Monterey Peninsula near the whistling buoy off Ocean View Boulevard. Ed Ricketts frequently collected marine specimens here, as mentioned in *Cannery Row* (1945) and *The Log from the Sea of Cortez* (1951).

Hollister

Hollister is located in San Benito County between San Jose and Salinas. In 1874 John Adolph Steinbeck, John Steinbeck's great grandfather, arrived here and opened a flour mill.

Jolon

Jolon is the primary setting for Steinbeck's early mythical novel *To a God Unknown* (1933).

King City

John Steinbeck had strong ties with King City. In 1890 his father settled here, met his wife, Olive Hamilton, and developed his skills in bookkeeping and in the flour mill business. Steinbeck records the romance of his parents in *Travels with Charley* (1962) and other family history in *East of Eden* (1952). King City is also the setting for parts of *Of Mice and Men* (1937) and *To a God Unknown* (1933).

Los Gatos

When Steinbeck was working on *Of Mice and Men* (1937) in the spring of 1936, he and his wife Carol built their first home a mile west of Los Gatos. Here he wrote *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939). Because the area became increasingly populated and noisy (he complained of the noise in the journal he kept while writing *The Grapes of Wrath*), Steinbeck sold the house and built another on the old Biddle Ranch property some five miles south of Los Gatos in the Santa Cruz Mountains.

Monterey

In 1944 Steinbeck moved back to California from New York and purchased the Lara Soto adobe, a house he had wanted since boyhood. John Steinbeck and Gwyn, his second wife, lived there only a short time, however, and sold the house a year later. Monterey is the setting for some of Steinbeck's best writing *Tortilla Flat* (1935), *Cannery Row* (1945), *Sweet Thursday* (1954). Mentioned in *Travels with Charley* (1962) and *The Log from the Sea of Cortez* (1951).

Pacific Grove

In 1903, Steinbeck's father built a three room summer cottage on 11th Street in Pacific Grove. Steinbeck lived in this cottage with Carol from 1903-6, and returned here intermittently in the 1940s. Pacific Grove sites are frequently mentioned in Steinbeck's fiction, including *Cannery Row* (1945), *Tortilla Flat* (1935) *The Red Pony* (1937), and *Sweet Thursday* (1954).

Point Lobos

Located between Monterey Bay and Big Sur on the Pacific Coast, Point Lobos is a National Landmark. Point Lobos served as setting for scenes in *Cannery Row* (1945), *Sweet Thursday* (1954), and *The Log from the Sea of Cortez* (1951). Ed Ricketts collected specimen in caves at Point Lobos. It is a beautiful point that John Steinbeck and his sister Mary especially loved.

Salinas

In 1902, Steinbeck was born in Salinas. He lived here until 1919, when he left to attend Stanford University. Salinas is a central location in many works, particularly *East of Eden* (1952). See also "The Day the Wolves Ate the Vice-Principal," "How Edith McGillcuddy Met R. L. S," (1938) and *The Red Pony* (1937).

San Jose

San Jose is the northern gateway in Steinbeck Country. Both Steinbeck's mother, Olive Hamilton, and his first wife, Carol Henning, were born in San Jose. San Jose is frequently mentioned in Steinbeck's fiction.

Soledad

Of Mice and Men (1937) takes place near Soledad. In the 1920s Steinbeck worked briefly at a Spreckels ranch near Soledad.

Spreckels

Six miles west of Salinas, Spreckels is a company town. In the 1920s and 1930s the Spreckels Company was the largest sugar beet factory in the world. Steinbeck's father worked as a plant manager at Spreckels for a number of years and was instrumental in getting summer jobs for his son as a handyman and later as a bench chemist. Working at Spreckels, Steinbeck heard stories he included in *Tortilla Flat* (1935). Parts of the film version of *East of Eden* and the television presentation of his short story "The Harness" (1938) were filmed at Spreckels.

Watsonville

Located between Santa Cruz and Monterey near the Santa Cruz Mountains, may be the setting of Steinbeck's strike novel, *In Dubious Battle* (1936).

For Further Information

A number of publications focus on Steinbeck Country. See Steve Crouch's photographic essay with text, *Steinbeck Country: Photographs and Words* (Palo Alto, CA: American West Publishing Company, 1973). This work has also been reprinted by several other publishers. Dr. Martha Heasley Cox, the former director of the Steinbeck Research Center at San Jose State University, traces the places that Steinbeck used in his writing in her essay "In Search of John Steinbeck: The People and His Land," *San Jose Studies*, vol. 1, no. 3 (November 1975), pp. 40-60. Oral historian Pauline Pearson has published an excellent guide that includes maps in her *Guide To Steinbeck Country* (Salinas, CA: John Steinbeck Library, 1984).

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Fiction

with year published

Cup of Gold - 1929
The Pastures of Heaven - 1932
To a God Unknown - 1933
Tortilla Flat - 1935
In Dubious Battle - 1936
Of Mice and Men - 1937
The Long Valley - 1938
The Grapes of Wrath - 1939
The Moon is Down - 1942
Bombs Away - 1942
Cannery Row - 1945
The Pearl - 1947
The Wayward Bus - 1947
Burning Bright - 1950
East of Eden - 1952
Sweet Thursday - 1954
The Short Reign Of Pippin IV - 1957
The Winter of Our Discontent - 1961
Viva Zapata - 1975
The Acts Of King Arthur and His Noble Knights - 1976

29 Academy Award nominations and 4 Academy Awards were given for screen adaptations of John Steinbeck stories.

Non-Fiction

with year published

Their Blood is Strong - 1938
Sea of Cortez (with Edwards F. Ricketts) - 1941
A Russian Journal - 1948
The Log from "Sea of Cortez" - 1951
Positano. Salerno, Italy: Ente Provinciale per il Turismo - 1954
Un Americain a New York et a Paris - 1956
Once There Was a War - 1959
Speech Accepting the Nobel Prize for Literature - 1962
Travels with Charley in Search of America - 1962
America And Americans - 1966
Journal of a Novel: The "East of Eden" Letters - 1969
Working Days: "The Journals of The Grapes of Wrath" - 1989
Zapata: A Narrative in Dramatic Form on the Life of Emiliano Zapata - 1993

Steinbeck's Journalism

John Steinbeck also wrote many articles for magazines and newspapers. At this time, there is no single book source that covers Steinbeck's journalism. Listed below are some sources that provide an introduction to the subject.

Sources and Further Reading

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1962 Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech

I thank the Swedish Academy for finding my work worthy of this highest honor. In my heart there may be doubt that I deserve the Nobel Award over other men of letters whom I hold in respect or reverence--but there is no question of my pleasure and pride in having it for myself.

It is customary for the recipient of this award to offer scholarly or personal comment on the nature and direction of literature. However, I think it would be well at this particular time to consider the high duties and responsibilities of the makers of literature.

Such is the prestige of the Nobel Award and of this place where I stand that I am impelled, not to speak like a grateful and apologetic mouse, but to roar like a lion out of pride in my profession and in the great and good men who have practised it through the ages.

Literature was not promulgated by a pale and emasculated critical priesthood singing their litanies in empty churches--nor is it a game for the cloistered elect, the tin-horn mendicants of low-calorie despair.

Literature is as old as speech. It grew out of human need for it and it has not changed except to become more needed. The skalds, the bards, the writers are not separate and exclusive. From the beginning, their functions, their duties, their responsibilities have been decreed by our species.

Humanity has been passing through a gray and desolate time of confusion. My great predecessor, William Faulkner, speaking here, referred to it as a tragedy of universal physical fear, so long sustained that there were no longer problems of the spirit, so that only the human heart in conflict with itself seemed worth writing about. Faulkner, more than most men, was aware of human strength as well as of human weakness. He knew that the understanding and the resolution of fear are a large part of the writer's reason for being.

This is not new. The ancient commission of the writer has not changed. He is charged with exposing our many grievous faults and failures, with dredging up to the light our dark and dangerous dreams for the purpose of improvement.

Furthermore, the writer is delegated to declare and to celebrate man's proven capacity for greatness of heart and spirit--for gallantry in defeat, for courage, compassion and love. In the endless war against weakness and despair, these are the bright rally flags of hope and of emulation. I hold that a writer who does not passionately believe in the perfectability of man has no dedication nor any membership in literature.

The present universal fear has been the result of a forward surge in our knowledge and manipulation of certain dangerous factors in the physical world. It is true that other phases of understanding have not yet caught up with this great step, but there is no reason to presume that they cannot or will not draw abreast. Indeed, it is part of the writer's responsibility to make sure that they do. With humanity's long, proud history of standing firm against all of its natural enemies, sometimes in the face of almost certain defeat and extinction, we would be cowardly and stupid to leave the field on the eve of our greatest potential victory.

Understandably, I have been reading the life of Alfred Nobel; a solitary man, the books say, a thoughtful man. He perfected the release of explosive forces capable of creative good or of destructive evil, but lacking choice, ungoverned by conscience or judgement.

Nobel saw some of the cruel and bloody misuses of his inventions. He may have even foreseen the end result of all his probing--access to ultimate violence, to final destruction. Some say that he became cynical, but I do not believe this. I think he strove to invent a control--a safety valve. I think he found it finally only in the human mind and the human spirit.

To me, his thinking is clearly indicated in the categories of these awards. They are offered for increased and

continuing knowledge of man and of his world---for *understanding* and *communication* , which are the functions of literature. And they are offered for demonstrations of the capacity for peace--the culmination of all the others.

Less than fifty years after his death, the door of nature was unlocked and we were offered the dreadful burden of choice. We have usurped many of the powers we once ascribed to God. Fearful and unprepared, we have assumed lordship over the life and death of the whole world of all living things. The danger and the glory and the choice rest finally in man. The test of his perfectability is at hand.

Having taken God-like power, we must seek in ourselves for the responsibility and the wisdom we once prayed some deity might have. Man himself has become our greatest hazard and our only hope. So that today, saint John the Apostle may well be paraphrased: In the *end* is the *word* , and the word is *man* , and the word is *with man*.

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